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A
S E R M O N
O N T H E
M I L L E N N I U M;
O R
R E I G N O F S A I N T S
F O R A
T H O U S A N D Y E A R S.

By JOSEPH GREENHILL, A. M.
Rector of East HORSLEY and East CLANDON, in SURRY.

L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.LXXI.

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E R R A T A:

Page 6, line 25, for understanding, read undertaking. Page 12, line 16, for immediate, read intermediate. Page 13, last line but two, dele and lofs, read loft. Page 14, line 25, after only, add not.



TO THOSE
THAT ESTEEM AND LOVE
THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND;

MORE ESPECIALLY
TO THE PARISHIONERS OF EAST HORSLEY
AND EAST CLANDON,

THIS
S E R M O N

ON THE
M I L L E N N I U M

IS,
IN ALL AFFECTIONATE RESPECT,
D E D I C A T E D

BY THE

A U T H O R.



A

S E R M O N

O N T H E

M I L L E N N I U M.

REVELATION XX. 4.

I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

THERE is no part of Holy Scripture that hath been treated with more contempt and scorn, nor any part thereof, that hath been more wrested than the Revelation of St. John. Prophecy, which is what this Revelation is declared to be, is God's History of what is to come to pass; and as it is not proper for man to know the times or the seasons, which God the Father hath put in his own power, nor but little of what is coming on in the appointed course of this world, till events confirm the truth, and explain the mysterious terms of prophecy; therefore of this book of prophecy, which is very extensive, even from the time it was given in, unto the end of this world, there can be but little thereof seen by man; yet any man may be, and the man who doth confine his view within due bounds, will be blessed in reading and hearing the words of this prophecy, and in keeping those things that are written therein.

What seems to have been a great cause of the Holy Scriptures having been wrested by the inhabitants of this country, and that much to their destruction, seems to have been that which should have been for their welfare and happiness, their having the Holy Scriptures translated into their native tongue, for now they are for hearing without the appointed Preachers, or Ministers of the Gospel. A translation affordeth light to the ignorant, but a light where there is no other advantage, obscure and easily to be extinguished, the truth of this may be seen from a general view of the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures are the Revelation of the will of God in man's redemption and salvation, not the word of man, nor to be treated as such, but to be regarded as the word of God Almighty infinitely wise and knowing; and all the wisdom and knowledge that we can obtain herein, cannot be obtained but by assiduous solicitation in the means he hath appointed, and by making a due use of what is given; it would be as far beneath the wisdom of God, to satisfy the curiosity of the captiously inquisitive, in the Revelation of his will, as it would be to gratify the covetous in their desires, or the vain and ambitious in their views, by the direction of his good and all-disposing Providence, which is ever found to disappoint them. Revelation being founded on the truth of God the Father's eternal purpose, for the redemption and salvation of man, from the continuance of the being of man, is like the pillar of the cloud, which God p'aced between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, darkness to some and light to others, and none have eyes, and cannot see the light of Holy Scripture, nor ears, and cannot hear the truth thereof, but they who ought to have such eyes and such ears; from whom the Gospel is hid, it is hid by Almighty God, in whose sight every creature is manifest, and all things naked and open unto his eyes; and as in the course and continuance of the material world, there is nothing but answers the purpose of its being permitted to exist, so in the moral world no man, whether good or bad, liveth or dieth to himself; and when God the judge of all shall finally display his justice, and reveal his righteous judgment, he will then be justified in all the sayings of his revealed will, for the redemption and salvation of man, as well as in all his appointments for the course of the continuance of this world, the end of all things is at hand*, things are in their appointed course, until all shall be gloriously closed.

The devil seduced man from the happy state he was created in, and betrayed him into darkness, pride, rebellion, and misery like his own, by proposing the greatest increase of his knowledge, in knowing good and evil as God; how great this darkness, and how boundless this pride is, an instance hereof may be seen in those who cast off their faith, and patient abiding on God's goodness for their happiness, their confidence which hath so great recompence of reward, for herein they set up their will above the will of God, and when they cannot bring the divine knowledge to a level with their own darkness, proudly arraigning it, they make it inferior thereto; and these sort of persons, when thro' conceit of their science, they give a loose to their tongue or their pen, it is not a less miracle to

* Ephes. iii. 10.

bring to truth and to silence them, than it is to make the dumb beast * speak.

Disputes with those who have their part with unbelievers are endless, their pride in wrangling being as great as that darkness in which they are lost; yet thus to judge from the strongest appearance of the present evil state of men, that they are thus reprobate, no room left for their repentance, but all opportunity thereof taken from them is spiritual pride in seeing others faults, and overlooking our own; for an evil heart of unbelief, is in fact the heart we are too subject unto; we should hope that that time of further tryal and gracious affliction may be extended to those, who at present disbelieve and despise the riches of God's mercy and goodness in his revealed will, which may lead them to repentance; but till some sign of their repentance is seen, it is by no means prudent to cast this pearl at their feet, for nothing less can bring a man to an hardened disbelief of the mystery of godliness, by being credulous in the mystery of iniquity, than deserved outer darkness, but such determinate state of darkness in man, it is not for the human eye to see; wicked men indeed by their public, professed and scandalous impiety and prophaneness, condemn themselves in the sight of men; neither rash, nor censorious in their judgment, for from that judging of others, which reason dictates, we cannot, we ought not to refrain, nor from properly shewing our resentment thereof, and all the favourable opinion conceived in generous and good minds of those by whom offences are seen to come, is founded on their repentance.

Proposing that what shall be treated of in this discourse, on the Reign of Saints or Christians for a thousand years, signified unto St. John, shall be promotive of that love of man, and of that humility, which our pure religion requires from us, founded on that fear and love of God which keeps us unspotted from the world, and that what is said hereon shall be within the apprehension of a man but of common and of ordinary understanding, and useful to such as think not more highly of themselves than what they ought to think, but think of themselves as members in one body, whatever office they may have; I shall mention first some general observations on the book of Revelation, and a general truth of our Holy Religion, before I come to treat of the words, chosen the subject of this discourse.

The first part of the book of Revelation, contains Prophecies concerning the state of the seven churches, which were in Asia, and these prophecies were directed to the Bishops presiding in those

* Of modern apostates Monsieur Voltaire appears the greatest; and considering his age, and the pertness, the subtilty and the baseness, with which he hath carried on his apostacy, he must be owned to be a very surprizing person, and fit to be placed among the greatest collection of monsters, there to be gazed at.

churches,

churches, by our most blessed Lord and Saviour, and were so interpreted and explained, that to those concerned, and who lived at that time, there could be no difficulty in understanding what was the meaning thereof; and men were called on to hear and regard what was not numbered among the secret things of God, but thus plainly revealed concerning the seven churches in Asia; but in the other part of this book, a discovery was made to St. John, the most beloved disciple of our Lord and Saviour, of the awful and glorious majesty and power of Almighty God, and of his eternal Son, too extensive, high and mysterious for the human sight, being what can be only seen in part, either in what a plain interpretation was given, or where facts come to pass have rendered it easily to be seen by all, but those who hate the light given. There is nothing that concerns our happiness revealed in the will of God, but what the learned and unlearned may know to their comfort and blessing; and great thanks are due to those learned and good men, who have dedicated their time and pains in reading this book of prophecy for their good intent, that others might hear the words thereof, and keep those things which are written therein; and it is only pride and presumption that induces the unlearned to wrest this Holy Scripture; pride, which even hides truth from the most learned, and leaves them in the worst of ignorance, that of positive ignorance, thro' their vain affectation of wisdom and science, and their unwary giving into the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world.

The difficulties attending such an understanding, as the explaining any part of the book of Revelation, are difficulties great in themselves, and made by far much greater thro' partiality and inveterate prejudices; but the Holy Scriptures being a fund of light inexhaustible, no preachers or ministers of the Gospel, since the Apostles and Prophets, ever have or will teach, or explain the Holy Scriptures so fully and perfectly, as to leave no room for other ministers after them to add somewhat to their explanations, more especially as to what our Lord, whose prophecies are compleat and unlimited, extending to the fulfilling of all things, hath prophesied of, and declared to be the state of his church here on earth; for as the time of fulfilling all things prophesied hereof is continually drawing towards its conclusion, so length of time casts a light on things heretofore not discernible; and he who distinguishes between the differences of times, will agree with the Holy Scriptures, so that herein, if we truly and duly confine our view within the limits of human knowledge of things foretold and come to pass, we shall with patience wait for those which are to come.

The truth of our Holy Religion, which I shall now mention, is, that "the church of Christ ever was, is, and for ever will be militant

tant here on earth, such its state, more or less, during its whole continuance here on this earth; and this is a general truth not to be contradicted, but by explaining some passages of Holy Scripture in a manner repugnant to the whole tenour thereof, either by wresting prophecies from what is meant thereby, or by limittin^g them to what is only meant in part.

We are by the Holy Scriptures forbidden inordinate love of the things of this world, and cautioned against an unguarded and false friendship with men; for the whole world, as to what is generally practised in it, lyeth in wickedness; inordinate love of the world brings men to hate all that is good and virtuous, hence men hated both our Lord and his Apostles; and he acquainted them that, as his servants, they could not expect to be greater than he, nor to meet with better treatment from the world for the good they should do, than what he had done; and he encouraged them to bear up against the oppositions and afflictions they should meet with upon the noblest motives, and told them, that he would give them strength and comfort to overcome these oppositions, great as they were, and wisdom, that all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist. True it is, tho' atheistical persons in their willing and affected ignorance affirm all times to be the same, that this was a very extraordinary time in the world, a due and full time according to God's determinate council, for bringing about the redemption of man, and other men must not expect equal strength and comfort with that given to the Apostles and primitive Christians, as they have not equal difficulties and oppositions to surmount, yet all that will be godly in Christ Jesus, must expect not only in ordinary, but in the best of times, such difficulties and oppositions in the narrow way that leadeth unto life, as require great constancy, in seeking for comfort and strength to enable them to go thro' difficulties and temptations, and enter into life; for our life here is but a state of tryal, and probably more of the many called defeat themselves of their eternal salvation, thro' want of due care thereafter, than thro' an ill-grounded confidence therein.

Since the Gospel was first published to all the world, and the elect gathered together by those messengers of God the Apostles and Prophets, or first inspired Preachers thereof, various have been the times of its reception; in general the Princes of this world have been more or less for establishing professions of the Christian faith, as it appeared to them to be more or less agreeable to their worldly interest; and this hath made them to defend * with violence, contrary to the most expresse will of the Almighty founder, such particular pro-

* Honourable reception of, and due regard for the profession of Christianity, is the true and only means to defend the Christian religion.

essions thereof, as they apprehended were coincident with such their interest; and as our Lord declared himself a King for the sake of his church above all principalities and powers, and that he had overcome the world, and that whosoever should suffer with him, should reign with him; hence Kings of this world, insensible and regardless, how hard it is to kick against the pricks in opposing Almighty power, have often opposed our Lord, except in those foretold most prosperous days of Christianity, and that with a jealousy like that of Herod's; and herein they have been seconded as he was by faithless and unbelieving Priests, false Prophets, and all the venal tribe of hirelings, who have conformed to the worst of times, and then prophesied and set forth deceits and smooth things to make the iniquity of such times current, while the clergy of the church of this land have in the most perilous times stood in the gap.

What St. John saw of the state of Christianity for a thousand years, I apprehend, was, that thrones and power were given for that space of time to good and faithful Christians, to those, who out of regard for their religion and salvation, should cut themselves off from the enchanting pleasures of this world, and from the profits that are the wages of the iniquity prevailing in it; to those, who would not worship or idolize tyrants, or their image or likeness, nor give any countenance to, nor take any part in their oppressions of mankind, that a number of such succeeding one another, who, thus took their cross and followed their Lord and master, were to live and reign with him a thousand years, a space of time that should be the happiest days of Christianity, when numbers of such Christians in their respective stations were thus priests of God and of Christ, by being shining lights and fair examples before men, of the blessedness of that religion they professed, and herein eminently happy during that space of time; and as all men are lost in trespasses and sins, and counted dead before God, and are only quickened, regenerated or raised to a life of virtue and happiness but thro' our Saviour's mediation and intercession, so the rest of the dead, the rest of mortal men, those of them who are the remaining number of God's elect, are to live in their first resurrection, their resurrection from the misery and sins of their fallen nature after the thousand years were finished, when there should ensue great deceit, corruption and decrease of faith; and when Christians see the enmity and opposition there is in the world to the faith they profess come to pass as foretold, they should be nothing terrified by their numerous adversaries, to be so argues a prevarication in them of the faith they profess, and that there is wanting in them what is made the bond of their perfectness; for how do they who are terrified by the adversaries of our religion believe, that "Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith, is the only and eternal
" son.

A S E R M O N.

“ son of God, that his kingdom * is not of, but above this world ;
 “ that all power is given unto him in heaven and in earth ; that God
 “ the Father hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly
 “ places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and domi-
 “ nion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but
 “ also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his
 “ feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church ; that
 “ he was loved of the Father before the foundation of the world ;
 “ that he is before all things, and by him all things consist, that he
 “ was in the beginning, that all things were made by him, and with-
 “ out him was not any thing made that was made ; that he is the
 “ blessed and only potentate ; that his throne endureth for ever and
 “ ever, that his scepter is a scepter of righteousness, and that the
 “ nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish ; that he
 “ hath a name that no man can read, being that King of Kings and
 “ Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality dwelling in that light,
 “ which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor
 “ can see ; that he upholds all things by the word of his power, able
 “ to subdue all things to himself ; that God the Father hath commit-
 “ ted all judgment to him, and hath given the heathen for his in-
 “ heritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession,
 “ and that from his throne in heaven he doth behold ungodliness and
 “ wrong” ; that ungodliness and wrong that will at last overwhelm
 an incorrigible world, that herein our Lord and Saviour triumphant-
 ly leading captivity captive, limits the power of evil spirits, and rules
 the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, making all things work
 together for good to them that love God by the gifts given unto
 them ; that he is gone forth thus conquering and to conquer, and
 must so reign till he hath destroyed all enemies, and the last enemy
 death ; and when all things shall be subdued, then this kingdom of
 Christ’s will be given up at the last day, the day of fulfilling and res-
 titution of all things, when wicked men, and the angels that left their
 first estate reserved for punishment, shall receive their final doom ;
 and when all the Israel of God shall be saved, the righteous, they that
 have done good, shall go into everlasting life, heirs with those that
 have been joined or united by faith in Christ Jesus, and shall then
 see him, as he is the brightness of the glory of God the Father, and
 the express image of his person ; and how that God is all in all, and
 with incessant joy for ever adore the blessed Trinity, the kingdom of
 Heaven or of God being fully come unto them in a new earth,

* Of modern teachers, who by their false glosses have cast confusion and darkness
 on the Holy Scriptures, none equal the late Bishop of Winchester, for therein he ex-
 ceeds what any scribbling lady hath written against the kingdom and church of Christ.

wherein dwelleth righteousness, where with highest pleasure they will do his will, and hallow his name with everlasting praises.

The righteous, while they are detained in this world, (and a succession of such in opposition to the mystery * of iniquity, God will raise up till the day of the Revelation of his judgment) are a light unto the world, in the fair proof and witness that they give of the blessedness of our Holy Religion, for being the reverse to tyrants and to their idolizers, by seeing, and in fact acknowledging, that in their station they are but servants of others, and that whatsoever of learning, valour or riches, their gracious Lord and master hath given them, he hath given for this purpose; and the true Christian is the only patriot, whether he be king or subject; it is Christianity, and that only, that can preserve their mutual happiness; and from hence it was, that men heretofore proved dutiful and respectful to their Prince, and faithful to the public, their principles of obedience due to Princes being agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and their practice agreeable to their principles, they faithfully served, honoured and humbly obeyed kings in God and for God, according to his blessed word and ordinance, as they believed that he over-ruled all the kingdoms of the world from his throne in Heaven, beholding all the dwellers on earth, and ruling the hearts of Princes and of People.

God immensely good is long suffering, and nothing but the iniquity of nations determines him to pull down and to destroy; and when this determines him so to do, nothing can save them but their repentance and amendment, their boasted confidence in that that is endless, hurries them on the faster to their destruction; this is what faithful Christians have, and what every faithful Christian doth believe in relation to the governments and states of this world; and the hope that he hath of being a glorious and happy citizen in another world, makes him a good, a patient and industrious citizen in this world; and such cannot but be free and happy in their freedom, by rendering to God the things that are God's, and to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; while to nations prophane and wicked, rebellious and incorrigible, not to be forewarned, so given up to their own destructive ways, not a Prince † long tutored in the school of affliction could do any good, for the licentiousness and iniquity prevailing among such people, is the direct, sure, and inevitable way to slavery, which makes the rich and the poor of a country equally miserable, no slave being more unhappy than the slave of greatness, and from which it is only a sense of religion can preserve them.

The piety prevailing heretofore in this land, may be seen from the great regard had of places of worship, which are now generally neglected

* 2. Thes. 11.

† Not a second Alfred.

lected and suffered to go to decay, while other buildings are adorned with elegance; and from the care there was taken to maintain and support the poor * in a manner the charity of our religion requires, who are now generally left to sink under an allowance not sufficient to sustain them, or are forced to live herded together promiscuously, the aged and the young, the clean and the nasty, the diligent and the idle, under a master, who makes a trade of their necessity. But here it may be objected, and that with reason to, that men heretofore in regard to adorning churches fell into superstition, at least those of the church of Rome, who not seeing how Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, neither how he blotted out the letter of the law, nor how all the members of his body are complete in him the head of all principality and power, were beguiled of the reward or happiness attending their religion, by being led by that corrupt, and cautioned against doctrine † of works of supererogation, or works besides over and above God's commandments, not only into much superstition, but into that idolatry into which they fell; and as to maintenance of the poor, that which should have been a comfortable relief, and a competent support of them, this superstition and excess in the givers, and waste and unfaithfulness in the appointed distributors, made a prey to those whose aim and design was to destroy and spoil, and not to reform, which aim and design made visible by time, divided Christians in these parts of the world into two parties, *Papists* and *Protestants*, who with keenest eye seeing each others faults, but blind thro' strong delusion to their own, have with all bitterness vilified ‡ each other, and brought the religion they profess into great disrepute before men by their hatred of, and malice towards, and their scorn and contempt of one another, when the blessed Founder of their religion had made love of one another the peculiar mark or character, whereby all men were to know who were his disciples.

The Papists have not only adhered to all the excess and errors, that length of time and incidents brought in among them without any condescension to others, but have, thro' worldly policy and cunning, prevailed upon their devotees and bigots to destroy with cruel persecution those who differed in opinion from them; to oppose such gigantick pride and tyranny is certainly every true Christian's duty; but how hath this opposition in general been exerted, but by pride, cruelty and malice, not inferior to that of Papists, and the violent of both parties have besieged the true Catholic Church, those who with their fellow members make up that beloved city of God, such as

* By the Holy Apostles, the care of maintaining and supporting the poor was solemnly appointed to be the office and ministry of Deacons.

† Colos. 11.

‡ This bad disposition in them is much fermented and heightened by partial Historians.

out of fear of God, and love of man, will not join the violent of any party, esteeming the conscientious and quiet sectary, with all his errors, far more acceptable and lovely than the furiously * Orthodox, and now Gog and Magog, with all earthly or worldly policy and strength, will besiege as long as this world shall endure this city of God, who is a consuming fire to all, who oppose and exult themselves above him.

Thus have I endeavoured to cast some little light on a mysterious passage of the book of Revelation, the fullest and last prophecy given, humbly offering it with all due deference to others consideration, for herein I advance nothing dogmatically or positively, only there may be said in behalf of this explanation, which should recommend it to the consideration of those it is principally addressed to, that it appears agreeable to the opinion of those blessed reformers, who compiled the public service of our church; for had they not believed now to be the immediate space of time † between the Millennium and the end of the world, all that is advanced by this explanation, how could they have directed us to pray, that "it would please God of his gracious goodness shortly to accomplish the number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom"; for they run into no dotage about a temporal millennium, a dotage like the temporal restoration of the Jews, more becoming Judaizing than true Christians. But after all, what will signify knowledge without that love which edifieth, and is the bond of perfectness in us? Therefore here shall be mentioned what is apprehended chiefly to have destroyed this love in those, that profess themselves members of the church reformed.

It is most evident and certain, that by the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we are forbidden all boasting of knowledge and the being puffed up with pride, upon account thereof makes it destructive, they who protest against and dissent from the errors of others, ought not only to know better, but to do better than others; and tho' Christians are bound to be instant in season and out of season for what will advance their religion, and to contend earnestly with unwearied patience for the faith once delivered to the saints, yet how far and how long they are to be carrying on their protestation against, and their dissent from the errors of others, is what they should be careful and cautious in, lest thereby they become equally blind to God's wisdom and universal goodness, and to their own faults.

The church we belong unto is Catholic, owns itself to be but a part of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, and expressed its protesta-

* Furiousness is suitable to the Heterodox, but not to the Orthodox, the wisdom commanded them is what only becometh them.

† A time if it is not now, must be.

tion against the errors that had in length of time crept into the Church of Rome, with the temper and moderation becoming Christians, charging the Church of Rome with having done no more than what other Churches had done before, that is, in length of time to have erred, by saying, that "as * the Church Hierusalem, Alexandria and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith; and every true Christian allowing this hath compassion on them."

Faith and religion is not nor cannot be otherwise than a positive institution preserved by God, the God of peace and order among a people that live in unanimity and harmony with, and in love for one another; but protestation and dissent are words expressive of such dislike and detestation, as are apt to lead men into strife and hatred, and the continuing very long therein, and resting thereon, is a ground and means for men to have no religion at all, or a religion the direct reverse to Christianity; the truth of this appears from what came to pass here in the time of the grand rebellion; for certainly the nation was then a nation of Protestants †; and from what is passing now in Poland.

The Dissidents or Dissenters in Poland, had great reason to protest against the Church of Rome, by having experienced the cruelty of that Church, which in height of pride pretending to infallibility, can bear no dissent from it; the Papists in Poland were the original cause of the misery prevailing in that country, the misery that results from pestilence and sword, and from the danger of seeking protection from foreigners; but countries are not ruined by foreigners, their ruin always comes from themselves; the original debt under the burden of which a nation sinks is its original sin and guilt, arising from the people thereof rendering evil for evil, when the multitude of sins or evil with which this world abounds, can be no otherwise suppressed or overcome but by the charity or goodness of our Holy Religion; and a nation where there is no more in general than the bare hypocritical profession thereof, that nation will fall from its true, perfect or Christian liberty into such open and scandalous profaneness and public blood guiltiness, as calls for divine vengeance to afflict and punish such a people, by depriving them of their outward liberty, and their inward loss.

The Dissidents in Poland by carrying their resenting Protestantism too far, and the Papists by abiding as they have by their infallibility,

* Article of Religion 19.

† The Disciples of our Lord were called Christians first at Antioch, and their assuming any other name upon account of their religion that is not expressive of their faith in Jesus Christ, and of their love and compassion for all Christians forbidden them. 1 Cor. i 14.

have brought their country to the condition it is in; and it appears, as if some of these Dissenters were thro' their aversion to Popery for turning Mahometans; and probably if the Turks had proved victorious, several of them would have turned Mahometans.

The godliness of the Gospel hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come, and is in the highest degree promotive of the honour and happiness of a country, making persons free and perfectly free, which godliness cannot be any how established in a country without the order, condescension and unanimity among a people, enjoined by the Gospel. Licentiousness and confusion in religion must be attended with the decay of faith, and that decay bring in upon the state * all sorts of iniquity, oppression, grievances, tyranny †, slavery, treachery, and rebellion; and herein, when the world's iniquity shall be come to its fulness, God of his gracious goodness will put an end thereto; accordingly decay of faith is the foretold sign of the end of the world, but whether such decay is general or not, no human eye can see; for if a scene of restlessness and discontent, excess and extravagance, rising, annoying and debauching one another, of being without natural affection, of deceiving and being deceived, is found to be prevailing in a country heretofore eminently above other countries for the valour and integrity of the men, and for the virtue and good housewifery of the women; yet in some other countries the Christian faith may be gaining ground. However this may be, the Holy Scriptures direct us not only to be any how presumptuously prying into the secret councils of God herein, or to be any how anxious about the time of the end of this world, a time the good and righteous man is to look for in joyful hope ‡ for himself and others, trusting in God's goodness and wisdom herein; accordingly the carefulness and watchfulness commanded in respect of this day, or the day of our death not overtaking us suddenly and unlooked for, is to be without those melancholy and gloomy thoughts, which damp all chearful industry in acting a virtuous and beneficial part of life.

The light of the Holy Scriptures hath eminently shone here in this country above what it hath in other countries, and our church is the purest and most reformed part of the Catholic Church; but no countries, so fluctating are the kingdoms and states of this world, have reason to boast of their reformation and the establishment thereof, even where there are the wisest and best, the most free and unbiassed

* What a traitor to his country, as well as a Judas to his God and Saviour, must that person be, who under colour of a conscientious regard for liberty, is for destroying all order in the Church, thereby preparing the way for destructive licentiousness and confusion therein.

† Of all kinds of tyranny, none are so lasting as the tyranny of a set of numerous petty tyrants.

‡ Revel. xxii.

of Princes, to succour and defend the public profession of the Christian faith; and where it is likewise most agreeable to general councils, the most solemn occasional meetings of the church, and of which when duly called and met, certainly there is the greatest probability of coming nearest to the truth of any means that can be devised, notwithstanding they have erred, for the Church was never infallible*, but when and as it was founded on the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone. Therefore the proper reflection for us to make, is not what small flaw or defect there may be in the reformation of our Church, in the reforming of which the reformers acted according to what they believed was right; but whether we are worthy of a Church so near at this distance of time in purity to the primitive Church; such a way of thinking would afford a prospect of our being induced "to walk worthy" of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and "meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of spirit in the bond of peace;" and this that we may do, God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

* The Church not being infallible, doth not take from its due authority and power.

F I N I S;

A S E R M O N

of Princes, to discuss and defend the public profession of the Christian faith; and where it is likewise more agreeable to general councils, the most solemn expressions of the Church, and of which when duly called and urged, certainly the great and proper life of coming nearer to the truth of any matter that can be given, notwithstanding they have been, for the Church was never in a state of error, but when and as it was founded on the apostles and Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone, and the proper foundation for us to stand on, as we shall see in the course of this discourse. The Church, I say, is not to be divided, but to be united, and to be united, it is necessary that we should be united to what they believed was right; but whether we are worthy of a Church to be at the right hand of time in way to the Kingdom of Christ, both a way of holiness, and a way of truth, is a question of our being indeed, as well as worthy of the Kingdom, which we are called with all that is in us, to seek, with long suffering, forbearance, and another's love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and this that we may do, God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

• The Church not being perfect, and not able to be so, and
 Power,

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